

REMARKS

The above amendment and these remarks are responsive to the Office action of 8 Nov 2005, designated FINAL.

Claims 1, 10-13, 17, and 19 are in the case, none as yet allowed.

35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1-7, 17 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Maners, U.S. Patent 6,507,826.

Applicants have canceled 2-7.

Claims 1, 13, 17, and 19 have been amended to clarify that the process being claimed relates to a three-way match approval of invoices received by the requisitioner matching

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goods/services received against invoice and purchase order before payment is made (without the paper chase of prior systems).

Maners, at Col 8, lines 59-62, on the other hand describes a process for processing "orphan" invoices. An orphan invoice is an invoice sent from a supplier to a purchaser that does not have reference to a purchase order. Unlike Maners, all of applicants claims specify the existence of a purchase order in a three-way match.

Maners, at Col. 8, line 63 to Col. 9, line 50, explains how from an orphan invoice (an invoice that does not reference a purchase order issued by the purchaser) a notification is issued to an authorizer. It is common within the art to handle invoices with no reference to a purchase order in this manner. However, applicant's claims are not directed to processing orphan invoices. Applicant's invention deals with an invoice that has reference to a purchase order, and that purchase order is designated as receivable. Applicant's process seeks a response from the requester that the goods or services have been received or performed to the satisfaction of the requester. The accounting (assignment of general ledger, department charge,

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~~etc.) for the invoice has already been done by virtue of the match of the invoice to the purchase order. From the content of the purchase order the requester is determined, and the requester asked if the goods or services have been received to satisfaction, thus completing the three way match.~~

Maners, at Col. 6, lines 6-20, deals with 'orphan' invoices.

Maners, at Col. 8, line 63 to Col 9, line 52, describes processing of invoices without reference to a purchase order number.

Maners, at Col. 9, lines 38-44, describes processing of 'orphan' invoices, and how a now authorized orphan invoice is sent to accounts payable for posting and payment. In the IBM claims, the invoice is posted in the accounts payable process upon receipt from the supplier. Due to the fact that the mating purchase order is designated as receivable, the invoice is blocked and will not be paid. The positive confirmation message is then generated to the requester, who must respond with a receipt based on the three-way match, indicating that the goods received are acceptable. This

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entry of the receipt now causes the invoice to become unblocked in the accounts payable application.

Maners, at Col. 3, line 59 to Col. 4, line 3, relates to the MicroEDI server, which does not exist in applicant's process. The process of the invention works regardless of how the invoice arrives at the purchaser: which could be as a paper invoice via surface mail or as an electronic invoice via EDI. In applicant's process there is no application function in the EDI translator. The IBM process utilizes the EDI subsystem for translation of the X12 or ANSI invoice to the format of input to the enterprise resource planning application.

Maners, at Col. 7, line 60 to Col. 10, line 17 introduces the term 'operational hold' and describes treatment of dependent invoices (invoices with reference to an existing purchase order number), but does not teach how goods or services purchased are actually verified as being delivered or rendered for payment.

Maners, at Col. 9, lines 44-52, describes a process for refusing payment of an orphan invoice.

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Maners, at Col. 8, lines 21-29 describes why an orphan invoice exists. A person at the purchasing company tells the supplier that X is needed. the supplier, without ever getting a purchase order from the purchasing company, ships the goods or renders the service. The supplier, in order to get paid, creates an orphan invoice.

In some company cultures, requesters of goods or services are allowed to deal with suppliers to get a job done, and so doing bypass procurement organizations. Applicant's process, on the other hand, drives all activity through procurement, and thus everything has reference to a purchase order. The negative and positive confirmation processes of applicant's invention allow for goods that would not normally come across a traditional loading dock to still be controlled: controlled in the case of negative confirmation, by allowing the requester to stop payment, and in the case of positive confirmation, by requiring the requester to explicitly indicate to accounts payable that the goods or services were rendered to the satisfaction of the requester before payment will be made.

Maners, at Col. 5, lines 40-58, does not relate to marking a purchase order as receivable or non-receivable.

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This paragraph explains how MicroEDI is superior in that existing purchase order information is present where prior EDI subsystems did not have the existing PO information. Maners says nothing about MicroEDI processing a dependent invoice differently if the supporting purchase order was designated as receivable or non-receivable.

All independent claims 1, 13, 17, and 19, and their respective dependent claims, distinguish Maners as set forth above. Further with respect to dependent claim 10, Maners transfers an authorized orphan invoice from the MicroEDI application to the accounting application. This is not what is being claimed. Claim 10 relates to the creation of a goods receipt in the enterprise resource planning application to clear the invoice block. The invoice was blocked prior to the creation of this receipt because the purchase order to which the invoice was related was designated as receivable.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants urge that the above amendments be entered

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and the case passed to issue with claims 1, 10-13, 17, and 19.

The Application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action by the Examiner is urged. Should differences remain, however, which do not place one/more of the remaining claims in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to phone the undersigned at the number provided below for the purpose of providing constructive assistance and suggestions in accordance with M.P.E.P. Sections 707.02(j) and 707.03 in order that allowable claims can be presented, thereby placing the Application in condition for allowance without further proceedings being necessary.

Sincerely,

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By


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